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Programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017

Revised estimates relating to the programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017 under sections 27, Humanitarian assistance, and 36, Staff assessment

United Nations Monitoring Mechanism

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The Security Council, by resolution 2258 (2015) of 22 December 2015, extended the mandate of the United Nations Monitoring Mechanism established under resolution 2165 (2014) for a period of 12 months until 10 January 2017. The present report contains the proposed revised estimates in the amount of $4,323,600 (net of staff assessment) for the Monitoring Mechanism for the current mandate period under section 27, Humanitarian assistance, and 36, Staff assessment, of the programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017.

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I. United Nations Monitoring Mechanism

Background

1. Nearly five years into the crisis in the Syrian Arab Republic, the humanitarian situation in the country continues to deteriorate with an increasing number of people requiring life-saving humanitarian assistance. Currently, an estimated 13.5 million people need some form of humanitarian assistance, including 6.5 million internally displaced persons. There are particular concerns about the situation of those in urgent need of assistance in hard-to-reach areas, including some 480,000 people in areas besieged by parties to the conflict. The humanitarian needs in the Syrian Arab Republic have reached a record high and are expected to continue throughout the year.

2. The delivery of humanitarian assistance within the Syrian Arab Republic remains extremely challenging and has become increasingly dangerous as a result of active fighting and shifting conflict lines. At the same time, administrative hurdles continue to hamper the delivery of humanitarian assistance to people in need, especially in hard-to-reach areas.

3. In paragraph 2 of resolution 2165 (2014) of 14 July 2014, the Security Council authorized the United Nations humanitarian agencies and their implementing partners to use the Syrian border crossings of Bab al-Salam and Bab al-Hawa with Turkey, Al Yarubiyah with Iraq and Al-Ramtha with Jordan, in addition to those already in use, in order to ensure that humanitarian assistance, including medical and surgical supplies, reaches people in need throughout the Syrian Arab Republic through the most direct routes, with notification to the Syrian authorities. It also established the Monitoring Mechanism and requested its expeditious deployment to the relevant neighbouring countries, namely Jordan, Iraq and Turkey. The Council subsequently extended the mandate of the Monitoring Mechanism, first by resolution 2191 (2014) and most recently by resolution 2258 (2015) of 22 December 2015, which extended the mandate until 10 January 2017. Resolutions 2165 (2014), 2191 (2014) and 2258 (2015) have enabled the United Nations and its humanitarian partners to reach people in need of assistance through the most direct routes and have facilitated access, especially in the north and south of the Syrian Arab Republic.

4. The Monitoring Mechanism contributes to the overall humanitarian efforts in the Syrian Arab Republic by actively participating in national and regional forums that make up the Whole-of-Syria approach, including the Strategic Steering Group, the Humanitarian Liaison Group (Turkey), the Cross-Border Task Force (Jordan) and relevant sector working groups. The Whole-of-Syria approach has led to improved operational planning, better coordination and increased transparency.

5. The Monitoring Mechanism maintains close links with all relevant partners, including host countries, national and local authorities, United Nations agencies, the Syrian Arab Republic, donors and States members of the Security Council to update, inform and ensure support for monitoring activities and to provide updates on the work of the Monitoring Mechanism. The Monitoring Mechanism has maintained excellent working relations with all stakeholders, which has helped to garner support, including by host Governments, for United Nations cross-border operations and the work of the Monitoring Mechanism.

6. The Director of the Monitoring Mechanism reports to the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator. The Secretary-General requested the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs to work on the establishment and expeditious deployment of the Monitoring Mechanism in his letter to the President of the Security Council of 16 July 2014 (S/2014/505). The Director submits regular updates, as well as mission reports, to the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and regularly consults with him on issues related to the Monitoring Mechanism.

7. The Regional Humanitarian Coordinator for the Syria Crisis provides strategic oversight for the Monitoring Mechanism as well as advocacy support and facilitates cross-border operations as necessary. The Director of the Monitoring Mechanism ensures close coordination with the Regional Humanitarian Coordinator for the Syria Crisis through regular meetings and exchange of information.

8. There is currently one consolidated monitoring team in place in Turkey that is operating at the Bab al-Salam and Bab al-Hawa border crossings and one in Jordan for the Al-Ramtha border crossing. In Iraq, owing to a precarious security situation around the Al Yarubiyah crossing, the Monitoring Mechanism has yet to establish a presence and deployment is not envisaged in the immediate future. However, should the situation improve, the Monitoring Mechanism is ready to deploy quickly.

9. In 2015, a total of 188 shipments or 4,882 trucks have crossed the border into the Syrian Arab Republic under the terms of resolutions 2165 (2014) and 2191 (2014), including 3,940 from Turkey and 942 from Jordan. Since the beginning of operations, a total of 240 shipments or 5,506 trucks have crossed, including 4,392 from Turkey and 1,114 from Jordan. The Monitoring Mechanism has successfully monitored and confirmed the humanitarian nature of all consignments without incidents or complaints from any party. The Monitoring Mechanism has obtained and maintained the consent of the host Governments for its operations, and developed constructive and cooperative relationships with them. In addition, it has helped to secure support for the United Nations cross-border operations from implementing partners, key donors and the Syrian Government.

10. As at December 2015, the Monitoring Mechanism-supported United Nations cross-border operations have reached millions of people across the Syrian Arab Republic, including food assistance for 2.5 million people, non-food items for 1.8 million people, water and sanitation supplies for 2.2 million people, and medical supplies for 4.9 million treatments.

11. Following the adoption of resolution 2165 (2014) in July 2014, United Nations agencies were swiftly mobilized to implement the provisions of the resolution, with the first trucks crossing from Turkey on 24 July and from Jordan on 6 August. The ensuing scale-up of operations took place gradually over a period of time with deliveries reaching a steady level by December 2014. The Monitoring Mechanism has played an important role in supporting advocacy for cross-border operations.

12. The Monitoring Mechanism introduced innovative ways to improve and streamline its monitoring. This includes, for example, the use of technology, such as metal detectors and other devices, including its own tamper-evident tapes and seals. The Monitoring Mechanism has also amended its monitoring modalities, which allows teams to monitor a greater number of trucks with fewer monitors. In June

2015, the Monitoring Mechanism completed the development of an online database used to record, track and analyse monitoring data and statistics.

13. Following the adoption of resolution 2165 (2014), the requirements for the establishment and operations of the Monitoring Mechanism for the biennium 2014-2015 were met through the use of a commitment authority approved by the Secretary-General and commitment authorities concurred to by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, under the terms of General Assembly resolution 68/249. Those commitments were subsequently reported and appropriated in the context of the performance reports for the biennium 2014-2015.

14. In the initial phase of the mandate, the Monitoring Mechanism relied heavily on surge staff provided through different surge mechanisms of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and other standby partner arrangements at little cost to the Mechanism. Since 2015, the Monitoring Mechanism has relied on regular staff, including international and national personnel and United Nations Volunteers. A total of 57 positions were established in 2015. As at 31 December 2015, 31 positions were encumbered, representing a vacancy rate of 45.6 per cent. The vacancy rate is due to the fact that the positions in Iraq are vacant owing to security constraints in the vicinity of the authorized crossing; and to the fact that some positions remain vacant following an internal staffing review of the Monitoring Mechanism which determined that a staffing level of 43 positions would provide the optimal operational capacity to deliver the mandate.

15. Throughout 2015, the Monitoring Mechanism has strengthened its administrative and financial management capacities, which has led to decreased dependence on the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the United Nations Development Programme. In 2015, the Monitoring Mechanism recruited dedicated administrative and support capacity, including for information and communications technology services, to provide the required back-office functions for the Mechanism in Turkey and Jordan.

II. Relationship of the activities to the biennial programme plan and programme of work for the biennium 2016-2017

16. The activities of the Monitoring Mechanism relate to programme 23, Humanitarian assistance, of the biennial programme plan (A/69/6 (Prog. 23)). They also relate to section 27, Humanitarian assistance, of the programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017 (A/70/6 (Sect. 27)).

17. The objective, expected accomplishments, indicators of achievement and performance measures are set out below.

Objective, expected accomplishments, indicators of achievement and performance measures

Objective: To ensure that humanitarian assistance reaches people in need throughout the Syrian Arab Republic through the most direct route

Expected accomplishments	Indicators of achievement
(a) Increase in the number of humanitarian trucks crossing the border	(a) Increased number of consignment crossing to the Syrian Arab Republic through the border crossing of Bab al-Salam, Bab al-Hawa, Al Yarubiyah and Al-Ramtha *Performance measures* Actual 2014: 52 Estimate 2015: 188 Target 2016: 250
(b) Increase in the amount of humanitarian aid reaching people in need throughout the Syrian Arab Republic	(b) Increased number of United Nations and partner agencies delivering aid through the cross-border operations to people in need in the Syrian Arab Republic *Performance measures* Actual 2014: 6 Estimate 2015: 7 Target 2016: 10

Outputs

- Trucks screened in accordance with the Mechanism's verification procedures and the Standard Operating Procedures (5,500)
- Reviews of the Mechanism's verification procedures and the Standard Operating Procedures (2)
- Notifications to the Syrian authorities for consignments crossing the border (250)
- Planning meetings with local authorities and the humanitarian community (50)
- Advocacy-focused meetings with local authorities and the humanitarian community to improve trans-shipment and monitoring procedures (6)

External factors

18. The Monitoring Mechanism is expected to achieve its objective and expected accomplishments on the assumption that: (a) authorities of relevant neighbouring countries will continue to provide the necessary support to implement the mission's mandate and ensure the safety and security of the personnel of the Monitoring Mechanism; (b) United Nations agencies and their implementing partners will carry on cross-border operations at least at the same level as in 2015; and (c) the border remains open.

III. Estimated additional resource requirements for the biennium 2016-2017

19. Additional resource requirements for the proposals described above amount to $4,323,600 (net of staff assessment) and are summarized in the table below.

Table
Additional resource requirements by object of expenditures
(Thousands of United States dollars)

Object of expenditure	*2016-2017 appropriation*	*Additional requirements*	*2016-2017 revised estimates*
Posts	23 723.4		23 723.4
Other staff costs	513.1	3 127.8	3 640.9
Consultants	48.6	12.1	60.7
Travel of staff	836.5	299.3	1 135.8
Contractual services	329.9	67.9	397.8
General operating expenses	794.7	468.1	1 262.8
Hospitality	20.7	4.0	24.7
Supplies and materials	104.2	102.4	206.6
Furniture and equipment	130.5	92.3	222.8
Grants and contributions	3 900.7	149.7	4 050.4
Total	**30 402.3**	**4 323.6**	**34 725.9**
Staff assessment*	**482 076.9**	**341.3**	**482 418.2**

* The staff assessment for the biennium 2016-2017 relates to all budget sections and the additional staff assessment relates to section 27.

20. The estimated requirements until the end of the current mandate amount to $4,323,600 (net of staff assessment) and comprise requirements for salaries and common staff costs for 14 international positions (1 D-1, 2 P-5, 4 P-4, 4 P-3, 3 P-2), 20 national staff (5 National Officers, 15 Local level), and 9 United Nations Volunteers ($3,127,800), consultants ($12,100), travel of staff ($299,300), contractual services ($67,900), general operating expenses ($468,100), hospitality ($4,000), supplies and materials ($102,400), furniture and equipment ($92,300) and grants and contributions ($149,700).

21. Following the adoption of Security Council resolution 2258 (2015) on 22 December 2015, and pending the preparation and submission of the present budget proposal, the initial requirements are being met through a commitment authority of the Secretary-General under the provisions of General Assembly resolution 70/250 on unforeseen extraordinary expenses for the biennium 2016-2017, which would be reversed following the decision of the Assembly on the present report.

22. No extrabudgetary resources are projected for the Monitoring Mechanism.

IV. Conclusions and recommendations

23. **The General Assembly is requested to:**

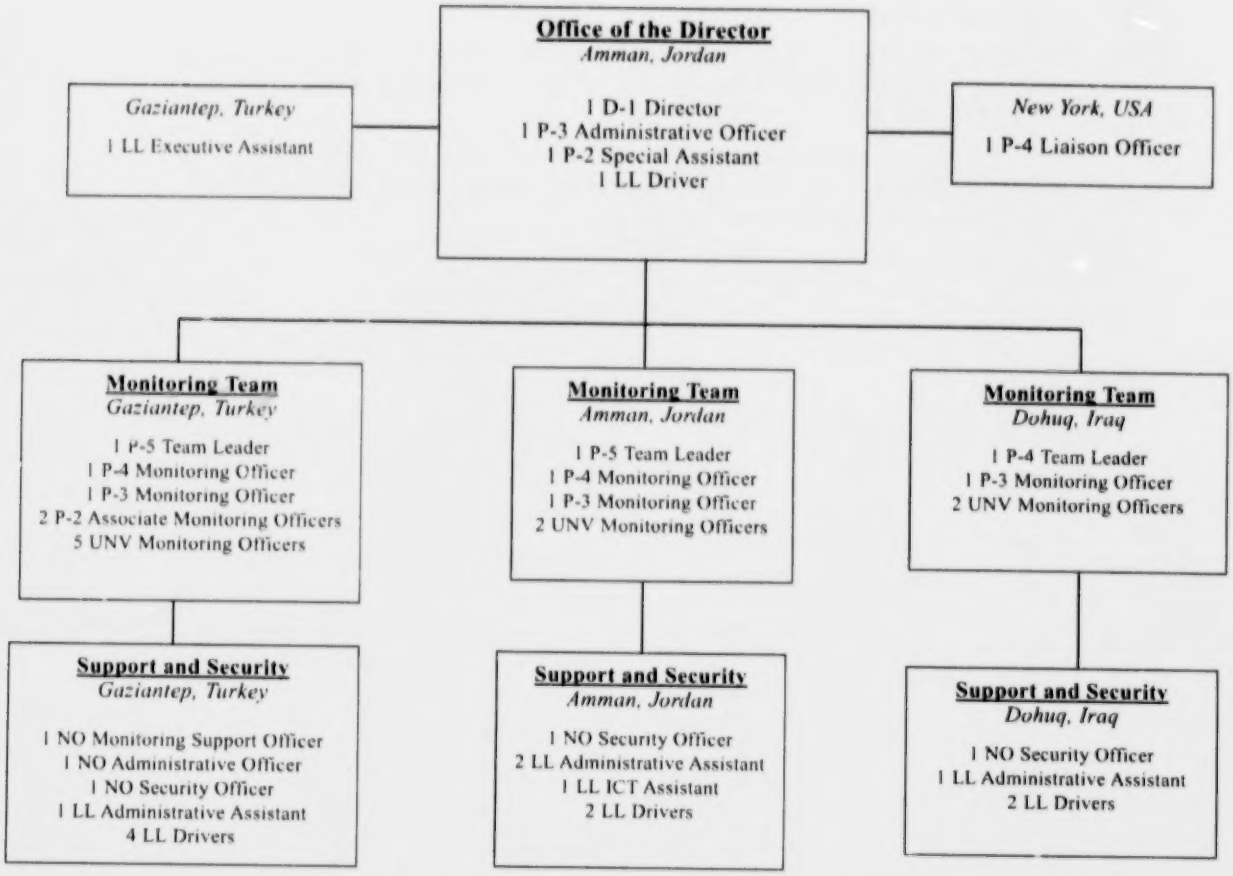
(a) **Approve the additional resources in the amount of $4,323,600 (net of staff assessment);**

(b) **Appropriate an amount of $4,323,600 (net of staff assessment) under section 27, Humanitarian assistance, of the programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017;**

(c) **Appropriate an additional amount of $341,300 under section 36, Staff assessment, to be offset by an equivalent amount under income section 1, Income from staff assessment.**

Annex

Organizational structure



Abbreviations: D, Director; P, Professional; NO, National Officer; LL, Local level.